GILLIAN FLYNN GOES FROM PAGE TO SCREEN

THE AUTHOR ON "GONE GIRL" AND "DARK PLACES" AS FILMS. PAGE 15

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War on the floor

B-boy. Fifth-degree black belt and competitive break dancer Ryan Wagner — known as "Napalm" — looks to burn his dancing opponents. PAGE 02

Ryan Wagner break dances in his martial arts studio in Bensalem, Pennsylvania. / RANDI FAIR, METRO

More wild and wacky papal souvenirs

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This news just might change your sex life

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Macnow: Murray is underrated in Philly

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B-boy 'Napalm' trains to 'burn' opponents

Martial arts. Ryan Wagner of Bensalem is a fifth-degree black belt and a competitive break dancer.

Ryan Wagner freezes a pose while freestyle break dancing in his martial arts studio in Bensalem, Pennsylvania. / RANDI FAIR, METRO

Go into Ryan Wagner's Bensalem martial arts studio, and he doesn't quite walk to shake hands.

He bounces.

At 29, he may be one of the nation's best competitive break dancers, a sport that has lured him to Japan, Korea and a few European countries.

He's also unfailingly positive — so friendly that it's hard to believe he goes by the name "Napalm" on the dance floor.

"I want to burn people I battle with," Wagner said.

The world of competitive break dancing isn't like football, where one league dominates the entire sport. Instead, break dancers — they call themselves b-boys or b-girls — compete in all manner of exhibitions and contests.

Wagner has won several of them. On Aug. 22, he'll compete in Orlando, Florida, against 15 other dancers for the right to represent the U.S. in one of the biggest: the Red Bull BC One World Finals, which will be held in Paris.

The dancers compete by going one-to-one in dance-offs. One dancer shows some moves, then the other. The dancers do this a few times until the judges declare a victor.

As a dance style, it has its roots in the early days of hip hop, and it's still marked by its fancy footwork and gravity-defying spins.

It's a young man's sport that can be rough on the body, Wagner says. He'll be one of the oldest competitors in Orlando, where the U.S. finals will be held.

Quoted

"I assume he rests every once in a while, but I've never seen it." Pincione

The regimen

He credited his longevity in the sport to diet (he said he eats chicken, brown rice and vegetables for nearly every meal) and a rigorous training regimen.

He basically goes from practicing martial arts all day to his home, where one room has been cleared out to make space for b-boy practice.

"I assume he rests every once in a while, but I've never seen it," said Lucas Pincione, 18, an instructor at Wagner's martial arts studio.

Martial arts, he said, have taught him how to fall and move in a way that avoids injuries.

That doesn't mean he's never been hurt. A torn adductor muscle in 2010 kept him from dancing for two years.

"I couldn't do legs, so I focused on my upper body," Wagner said. "I'd get on my knees with a sword and do thousands of swings per day."

Starting at a young age

For Wagner, the path to b-boying began when his parents signed him up for martial arts lessons at age 7.

His mom, Deby Wagner, said she signed him up because he had very little self-confidence. He was, she said, so shy he wouldn't raise his hand at school even if he knew the answer to a question.

He's now a fifth-degree black belt and the owner of a martial arts studio.

A few years into his training, an instructor showed him some basic break dancing moves. "Napalm" was born, but he had to teach himself.

"I literally threw myself on my face into the ground a bazillion times," Wagner said.

Deby Wagner said Ryan learned from mail-order VHS tapes. She'd sit with him in the living room as he rewinded them and paused them, trying to dissect how all the moves were done.

Then she'd help him practice.

"He'd say, 'Mom, hold my left foot while I try to kick my other one into the air,'" Deby said.

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Fatal. Gunshot wound originally reported as nosebleed

A 16-year-old boy was found shot in a southwest Philadelphia home after paramedics were called for a report of a nosebleed.

The incident happened at approximately 6:43 p.m. on the 6300 block of Reedland Street.

Police arrived at the home to find the victim with a gunshot wound to the face.

He died at Presbyterian Hospital at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Police did not immediately identify the victim, but 6ABC says he is Corey Tunnell.

Tunnell's grandmother, Caroline Armstrong, told the station he was hanging out with his cousins at the time he was shot.

"He's a very, very nice boy, very well mannered. He was playing basketball then he went over to his cousin's. He was playing with his cousins then I get a phone call that little Corey's been shot," Armstrong said.

Police have not made an arrest in the case.

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Logistics

Pope volunteers to train on app

Volunteers for the World Meeting of Families will get some of their training through a smartphone app used for scavenger hunts.

The company that makes the app, called Scavify, offers digital scavenger hunts to universities and companies to help new students and employees get acclimated. They also developed a scavenger hunt to help new Americans study for the citizenship test.

"With an anticipated 10,000 volunteers needing to fill so many important roles throughout the week of the [papal visit in the U.S.], volunteer training presented a challenge that we needed to creatively address," said Suzanne Kinkel, director of volunteers for the World Meeting of Families, Philadelphia 2015.

More than 1 million visitors are expected to come see Pope Francis Sept. 26-27, and organizers have put out a call for greeters, interpreters and digital diplomats, i.e. people to help manage tweets and social media for the papal visit.

The app that the papal volunteers will use isn't technically a scavenger hunt, says Jesse Rendell, a partner at Scavify and son of former Gov. Ed Rendell. The volunteers, Rendell said, are simply too spread out for that. Volunteers will use the app to learn fun facts about Pope Francis, get acquainted with the logistics of the event and test their preparedness for the job. DAN KELLEY

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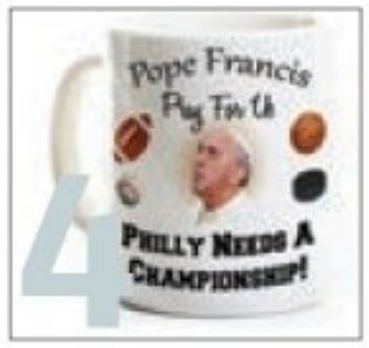
More weird papal visit merchandise

Holy bobblehead, Francis! People are having some fun.

Cheesesteaks, Rocky gloves and the Phillies: We detect a stereotype.

The folks at Aramark run the official World Meeting of Families store. It's full of sedate T-shirts and tasteful, life-size cardboard cutouts of His Holiness. On Etsy, however, there's a lot of weird merchandise that emphasizes Philadelphia over the pontiff. Some of it is tasteful; most of it references our love of cheesesteaks.



1 This isn't the first Pope Francis bobblehead. The official store run by the World Meeting of Families has one that is befitting of the pope's gravitas. On Etsy, there's a bobblehead of Pope Francis with boxing gloves held high in a Balboa-esque pose and a cheesesteak in one hand. Cost: $20.

2 Again with the cheesesteaks. The folks from PopeFrancisComestoPhilly.com have an understated little number that features a cheesesteak Photoshopped into Francis' hand. The company says it's a best-seller.

3 It's an inside joke. There has been a lot of debate on whether there would be a security fence around Francis' mass on the parkway and how large of a security perimeter there will be. One joke that emerged from that debate was whether the fence was designed to keep people out or Francis in. Commemorate that obscure debate with this "Free the Pope" T-shirt. Cost: $12

4 Because world peace isn't enough, Francis has gotten accolades for his bold statements on global warming and the dangers of extreme capitalism. Mostly though, we hope he blesses Chip Kelly. This mug runs $12.99.

5 The most famous television show to come out of Philadelphia meets God's emissary on earth. A button matches the green letters on pink background of "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" with a new phrase: Fresh Pope. It costs $2.

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Two of seven found guilty in Sayreville

Scandal. Two former high school football players were found guilty of disorderly conduct.

Sayreville War Memorial High School / GETTY IMAGES

The sex scandal that rocked a powerhouse New Jersey high school football program has ended with minor guilty verdicts for two of the seven teens charged with attacking four boys.

Kevin Flood, a lawyer for one of the young men from Sayreville War Memorial High School, told NJ.com that his client was found guilty of disorderly persons and petty disorderly persons offenses.

Flood helped the defendant beat the six most serious counts, including hazing and aggravated sexual contact.

Flood said his client and client's family were "extremely happy" with the verdict.

The other defendant had a similar result, sources told reporters.

The status of the cases against the five other teens is not known.

When charged, all the teens ranged in age from 15 to 17. Their alleged victims were four other boys on the football team.

At the time, Richard Labbe, the superintendent for Sayreville borough, said the hazing incidents "took place on a pervasive level, a wide-scale level and on a level … which the players knew, tolerated and generally accepted."

The scandal forced the school to cancel its football program.

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Terror suspect

Sixth man charged in New York - New Jersey ISIS plot

A New Jersey man was arrested on Monday on charges of conspiring to support the militant group Islamic State, becoming the sixth man to be arrested in New York and New Jersey since June as part of what authorities have said is a broader plot.

Nader Saadeh, 20, a former resident of Rutherford, New Jersey, viewed Islamic State propaganda online and traveled to Jordan in May in an effort to join Islamic State, the U.S. Department of Justice said. He is expected to appear in federal court in Newark on Monday.

His brother, Alaa Saadeh, was arrested on June 29.

Both Saadeh brothers were in frequent contact with Samuel Topaz, another New Jersey man, and with Munther Omar Saleh, a college student from Queens, according to authorities.

REUTERS

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Texas man accused of killing eight is charged in court

Jail. David Conley, who has a long history of violent crimes, was ordered held without bond.

David Conley / HARRIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Texas man accused of killing eight people, including his son and an ex-girlfriend, during the weekend in a Houston-area home was formally charged on Monday with three counts of capital murder, a crime punishable with the death penalty.

District Attorney Devon Anderson said her staff will take three to four months to decide whether to seek the death penalty for David Conley but added, "At this point, it's a no-brainer."

Conley, 48, wearing a yellow Harris County Jail uniform and with his hands cuffed in front of him for his court appearance, quietly answered "yes" when asked to confirm his identity at a hearing.

Assistant District Attorney Alycia Harvey said Conley, who does not yet have an attorney, has made a statement to authorities about his relationship to the victims, who included two adults and six children between the ages of 6 and 13.

Counts

3

Each of the three counts of capital murder can cover multiple offenses.

She said the dead included Conley's son, Nathaniel Conley, 13, and the boy's mother, Valerie Jackson. Conley was outraged that Jackson had changed the locks on her home, preventing him from getting inside, prosecutors said.

Conley slipped into the home through a window, tied up eight people — Jackson, her husband, and the six children — and shot them all in the head, according to the indictment.

After a standoff with sheriff's deputies who went to the house after a relative of one of the victims asked for a check on the family's welfare, the suspect opened fire on officers when they entered the home.

In addition to Nathaniel Conley, authorities identified the slain children as Honesty Jackson, 11, Dwayne Jackson, 10, Caleb Jackson, 9, Trinity Jackson, 7, and Jonah Jackson, 6. REUTERS

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State of emergency set in Ferguson after shooting anniversary violence

Sunday. The violence was in marked contrast to a day of mostly subdued, peaceful commemorations.

Authorities declared a state of emergency in Ferguson, Missouri, after gunfire erupted on the anniversary of a high-profile police shooting, and prosecutors on Monday charged an 18-year-old man with assault on officers.

The man, Tyrone Harris, was critically wounded in an exchange of gunfire with police on Sunday night as people marked the shooting death one year ago of unarmed black man Michael Brown by a white officer in Ferguson, a suburb of St. Louis.

Police said Harris was being treated in the hospital. They said St. Louis County prosecutors charged Harris, whose bond was set at $250,000, on four counts including "assault on law enforcement" and shooting at a motor vehicle.

The violence, which also included a drive-by shooting and police being pelted with objects, prompted St. Louis County to declare a state of emergency.

"In light of last night's violence and unrest in the city of Ferguson, and the potential for harm to persons and property, I am exercising my authority as county executive to issue a state of emergency, effective immediately," County Executive Steve Stenger said in a statement.

On a day of civil disobedience called by activists in Missouri on Monday, several people were arrested after jumping barricades at a courthouse in St. Louis, news video reports showed.

Clergy and civil rights groups led the rally of more than 100 people through city streets, shouting, "This is what democracy looks like," and, "Black lives matter."

On Sunday night in Ferguson, volleys of gunshots rang out as police in riot gear tried to disperse demonstrators blocking traffic and smashing storefront windows along a street that was a flash point for riots last year after Brown, 18, was shot dead.

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon called Sunday's violence "a sad turn of events" carried out by a criminal element

Nixon, who had deployed the National Guard to quell violence last year, did not make any mention of additional security for rallies on Monday planned in and around Ferguson. REUTERS

St. Louis County Police and Missouri State Highway Patrol troopers stand guard as protesters march on West Florissant Avenue in Ferguson, Missouri. / GETTY IMAGES

Quoted

"For the sake of all, it is my hope and expectation that today's events will be peaceful so that these efforts can continue to move the region in a positive direction." Gov. Jay Nixon

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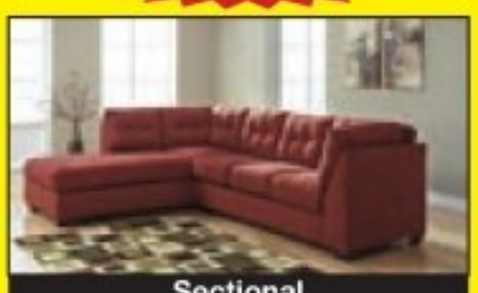

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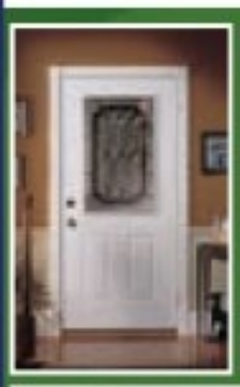

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Five things you

1 Family calls off private search for Florida teens lost at sea

The families of two 14-year-old boys from South Florida have ended a private search for the teens who disappeared last month on a boating trip in the Atlantic Ocean, local media reported.

The families of Austin Stephanos and Perry Cohen said in a statement on Sunday that their "hope becomes a prayer — that one day Perry and Austin will be returned to us," the Palm Beach Post and other news outlets reported.

The families had continued privately funded efforts after the U.S. Coast Guard ended its search a week after the boys disappeared on July 24.

The boys, who were fishing buddies and neighbors, were last seen buying fuel for their 19-foot, single-engine vessel.

Their overturned boat was found two days later, about 180 miles north of Jupiter, Florida, where they had launched it.

The Coast Guard's search had spanned nearly 50,000 square nautical miles up to North Carolina. REUTERS

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2 Grizzly suspected in death of hiker may be killed

A mother grizzly suspected in the death of a hiker whose partially eaten body was found at Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming has been trapped and will be killed if DNA testing proves she was involved in the attack, the park's superintendent said.

An autopsy on the hiker, Lance Crosby, 63, was planned Monday to determine the cause of his death.

Crosby, who was from Montana, was reported missing after failing to show up for work Friday morning, and later that day, a ranger found his body in a popular backcountry area off a trail near Yellowstone Lake. REUTERS

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need to know

Second firefighter dies battling forest fires

A 21-year-old Sacramento-area man became the second California firefighter to die battling wildfires this year, as a series of lightning strikes ignited blazes in the drought-parched Sierra Nevada over the weekend.

Michael Hallenbeck, of the Sierra foothill community of Shingle Springs, was killed on Saturday as he and his firefighting crew tackled a blaze near Lake Tahoe in Northern California, the U.S. Forest Service said on Sunday.

HALLENBECK

REUTERS

Chicago Public Schools to lay off 1,500 teachers, staff

Chicago Public Schools on Monday began notifying nearly 1,500 teachers and support staff who are being fired amid a previously announced $200 million budget cut and a shift in student enrollment.

The announcement came as CPS released its $5.7 billion 2016 budget, which includes a historic $1.1 billion budget deficit driven by rapidly rising pension payments.

The layoff notices will affect 479 teachers and 1,012 other staff members, out of more than 41,500 employees, according to the school system.

REUTERS

Twitter signs multiyear deal with NFL

The National Football League said it signed a multiyear partnership with microblogging site Twitter to deliver video and other content to NFL fans on a daily basis.

Content, including in-game highlights from preseason through Super Bowl 50, will be distributed across Twitter from the start of the 2015 season, the NFL said in a news release.

The partnership expands on the NFL's existing partnership with Twitter since 2013, and Twitter users will now have access to more official NFL content than in the past.

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US consulate target in wave of attacks on Turkish security

Violence. Killings come a day after the US sent six F-16 jets and personnel to an air base in Turkey.

Turkish special force police officers take cover during clashes with attackers at the Sultanbeyli district in Istanbul. / GETTY IMAGES

Two women shot at the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul on Monday, and at least nine people were killed in a wave of separate attacks on Turkish security forces, weeks after Ankara launched a crackdown on Islamic State, Kurdish and far-left militants.

The NATO member has been in a heightened state of alert since starting its "synchronized war on terror" last month, including air strikes against Islamic State fighters in Syria and Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants in northern Iraq. It has also rounded up hundreds of suspected militants at home.

A far-left group that killed a Turkish security guard in a 2013 suicide bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Ankara claimed it was involved in Monday's attack.

The Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C), considered a terrorist organization by the United States and Turkey, said one of its members was involved and called Washington the "archenemy" of the people of the Middle East and the world.

Turkey's foreign ministry condemned the attack and said security at U.S. diplomatic missions was being tightened. Police with automatic rifles cordoned off streets around the U.S. Consulate in the Sariyer district on the European side of Istanbul. REUTERS

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Long walk. Cosmonauts embark on six-hour spacewalk outside ISS

A pair of Russian cosmonauts began their workweek on Monday by cleaning the windows of the International Space Station (ISS), floating more than 200 miles above the earth's surface.

Station commander Gennady Padalka and flight engineer Mikhail Kornienko left the station's Pirs module at 1420 GMT, embarking on a six-hour spacewalk to install new equipment and carry out maintenance tasks.

The cosmonauts quickly completed their first task, installing equipment to help crew members maneuver outside the ISS, before cleaning a porthole window to remove years of dirt left by exhaust fumes from visiting ships.

"They developed a [cleaning] tool kit with two swabs with handles on them. The swabs are kind of a type of terry cloth," spacewalk specialist Devan Bolch said in a NASA video published before the walk.

The International Space Station is seen in an undated NASA handout picture. / NASA HANDOUT

Research lab

$100B

The International Space Station is a $100 billion research laboratory owned and operated by a partnership of 15 nations.

"It's kind of similar to what you would use on your car headlights when they get hazy to clean them."

The expedition is the 188th ISS spacewalk and the 10th for Padalka, who has spent more time in space than any other human. It is Kornienko's second venture outside the station.

REUTERS

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2 CULTURE

Twitter feed

Today, Larry the Cable Guy is full of useful information, Lena Dunham has a point and Dwayne Johnson got some good news.

@GitRDoneLarry: Fun fact. An armadillo is one of the only animals that when it dies gets turned into a lamp.

@lenadunham: When you respond to #blacklivesmatter with #ALLlivesmatter you really make yourself look like a meatball and a dingus

@TheRock: Doin' my happy dance cause my Dr said I don't have brain trauma. But she did say I need a psychiatrist.. #ShakeItOff

Let the Nicki Minaj pregnancy rumors begin!

Meek Mill is probably happy that his name is coming up for some reason other than constantly feuding with Drake. So what's distracting everyone from that spat now? Oh, just Nicki Minaj introducing him at a recent Burgettstown, Pennsylvania, concert as "my baby father," immediately setting off waves of speculation that Minaj is in fact pregnant — and apparently a fan of mangling popular phrases. (Seriously, "baby father"? That just sounds awkward.) As to whether there's any truth to the baby talk, Minaj is being less than helpful, retweeting fan reactions to the rumor with just a series of crying-laughing (or maybe just crying) emojis. That could really mean a number of things. This is why people shouldn't release statements comprised entirely of emojis. It's an imperfect communication system, people.

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Let's check in with Gavin Rossdale's former lover

THE WORD

Ned Ehrbar takes on the world of gossip.

NED EHRBAR
@Nedrick
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Gavin Rossdale may be on the outs with soon-to-be ex-wife Gwen Stefani, but at least one former flame is eager to hear from him: Peter Robinson, otherwise known as cross-dressing pop star Marilyn, who claims he and Rossdale dated in the 1980s. "He was the love of my life. I'm f—ing proud of that," Robinson tells Radar Online. "I want to say I would take him back in a heartbeat, but the reality goes, 'What is going on with you?' I've been celibate for 25 years. The next person I engage with I want to be adored and loved and not ashamed about who I am. I don't think we'll ever be friends and that upsets me because I really love him."

FKA Twigs still hasn't seen 'Twilight'

Robert Pattinson's fiancée, singer FKA Twigs, sounds like a real delight to interview. An intrepid Sunday Times reporter did her darndest to get through a chat with Twigs, but it doesn't sound like it went very well. She also starts the interview in tears and ends it with, "I think this could be my last interview. I can't do it. It makes me feel nutty."

The highlight, though, is when she admits she hasn't seen "Twilight." Actually, knowing how uncomfortable Pattinson is with the whole fame thing, maybe her not watching "Twilight" is a plus. "It's so bad to be basic," she explains. "I don't have an average day. I hate that kind of thing."

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Gillian Flynn goes Hollywood

Books. The "Gone Girl" author sees another novel, "Dark Places," hit the big screen.

Charlize Theron brings Flynn's creation to life in "Dark Places." / A24 FILMS

It may sound crazy, given Gillian Flynn's success with novels that portray darkly complicated female main characters, but that type of story — about that kind of woman — was something of a tough sell early on.

"When I first started writing my first book, 'Sharp Objects,' we got turned down by quite a few places that said, 'Women aren't going to read about a woman they don't like. And men will definitely not want to read about a woman who's bad,'" she says. And to me, I was like, 'What era is this?'"

FLYNN GETTY IMAGES

Those publishers are likely kicking themselves now, since Flynn followed up "Sharp Objects" with "Dark Places" and "Gone Girl," the best-seller that became a hit film starring Ben Affleck and Rosamund Pike, with a script adaptation by Flynn herself. And now "Dark Places" has hit theaters, starring Charlize Theron as a troubled woman revisiting the horrific murder of her family when she was a child.

Given the success of "Gone Girl" and now that "Dark Places" is out in the world, it would be understandable if Flynn started planning out her future works of fiction with an eye toward how they might do as movies. But she swears she hasn't.

"I don't think so, but I have not started the next book — don't tell my publisher, that's off the record," she jokes. But kidding aside, it's not an approach she'd advise for herself or other writers, as the results can be not so impressive. "I think writing a book with film in mind is a way to write a really bad book. You can usually tell those books are sort of packaged to become films," she says.

"I think that will be one of those things, one of those voices on my shoulder — shoulders? Now I've confessed too much! — that I'll be kind of battling a little bit with the next book, trying to fight that urge to make it seem commercial or filmable or whatever it is," Flynn admits.

One more thing

Trying — and failing — to lighten up

When Gillian Flynn sat down to write "Dark Places," she really, truly tried to center the story on a less-troubled female protagonist, but that just wasn't in the cards. "In the first draft, I was like, 'I'm not going to write another dark female narrator.' And the Libby I created was just ridiculous," Flynn explains. "She was more, 'We're going to solve this murder! Let's go!' Really optimistic. Like a Jazzercise instructor. Ludicrous. So I just erased her and started over again, with the opening line of the book: 'I have a meanness inside of me.' Then I really had her."

NED EHRBAR
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How to make a critter movie with no talking

"Shaun the Sheep Movie" takes certain characters from the TV show "Shaun the Sheep" and ships them off to the big city. / LIONSGATE

Q&A. The makers of "Shaun the Sheep" let us in on their brand of magic.

The English animation studio Aardman, of "Wallace & Gromit" fame, has long been at the forefront of stop-motion, not only in terms of technical proficiency but also in their distinctively British wit and charm. Their new "Shaun the Sheep Movie" carries on that tradition, as well as carrying over a world shown over several seasons of the TV show. It's also, like the show, completely dialogue-free — a rarity in animation, and film in general. "Shaun"'s directors, Richard Starzak and Mark Burton, talk with us about the difficulties of making a film without dialogue and how the eyes are the windows into the brain.

Did you encounter much resistance when it came to making a film without any dialogue?
Richard Starzak: Not really. "Shaun" the TV show didn't have any dialogue. But it scared us, I have to say. We worried if we didn't have dialogue, children might run out of patience after a while. As we started to put the storyboard reels together, we became really confident that it was going to work.
Mark Burton: There's a fine line between keeping it nice and simple so you understand the narrative, and being so simple that you just get bored. We tried to create a strong emotional story, and we made sure that, at any point, you knew what was going on in the characters' heads. If you understand what a character is thinking and what the problems are, you don't need words. You can get it all from nonverbal communication.

RICHARD STARZAK AND MARK BURTON
GETTY IMAGES

So much of the communication in the film — and in other Aardmans — is in the facial expressions, especially in the eyes.
Starzak: I directed the "Creature Comforts" TV series, and we did a lot of research into Method acting, such as what your eyes do when you're speaking — because your eyes can betray whether you're telling the truth or not, or whether you doubt what you're saying, whether you're trying to remember something while you're speaking. We put that into use in "Shaun." How we used the eyes was very important. There is a universal language of where your eyes are — whether you're looking down, up, or left or right. There's a universal language in how we use our eyes to access our brains.

MATT PRIGGE
@mattprigge
matt.prigge@metro.us

One more thing

The future

Has technology made stop-motion easier, especially compared to back in the day when it was on film?
Starzak: It's gotten a lot easier in the sense that you can actually see what you're doing now. When I started out as a stop-frame animator 20 years ago, you were kind of working blind. You didn't know what the shot was going to look like till you got it back from processing. Shooting digitally has made life a lot easier, because you can see it immediately. The animator can see the current frame he's working on compared to the previous one. And the camera's a lot smaller now. As a result, we use a lot less light than when we shot on film. That's made things more environmentally friendly as well.

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The boys take a backseat in "Supergirl" — don't expect to see Superman saving the day. / DARREN MICHAELS, CBS

How to find your 'Supergirl'

TCA update.
Melissa Benoist and others talk about how she came to "Supergirl" on CBS.

Playing a nearly invincible superhero might sound like a big task to take on, but Melissa Benoist, who suits up in the title role on CBS's new "Supergirl," felt up to the challenge.

"I think the second that I saw in my email, 'Supergirl,' I just knew that it was something exciting and rare that I wanted to be part of," said Benoist, speaking at the panel for the show at the Television Critics Association press tour.

"Melissa was the very first person we saw for Kara [Supergirl]. As soon as we saw her, we just knew she was the one. She had the strength, the hope, the heart, the humor," explained Andrew Kreisberg, one of the show's executive producers.

But Benoist's Supergirl isn't totally unstoppable. "It was important for us, especially to have a weekly TV show, to put her in situations where she isn't all powerful, so you can root for her," said Kreisberg. "You want to feel like Supergirl might not survive any of these things."

Taking on a character with decades of history in comic books means there's quite a lot of backstory to draw from, and Benoist said there were a few things she tried to keep in mind in taking on the part. "I just knew that she's such a beacon of hope, and I knew that her bravery and strength were so intrinsic to who she is, and I needed to feel that myself in order to play that."

Don't expect Supergirl's cousin Clark Kent to be popping up, however. "He will be a factor in her life, but you won't see him exactly onscreen. He's going to be more in the background. But he does play a part in her evolution of becoming a superhero," said Geoff Johns, chief creative officer at DC Entertainment.

Co-star Calista Flockhart, who plays Kat, Kara's "Devil Wears Prada"-type boss, did have one good idea about how to get him on the show.

"I think it would be a really good idea if Kat becomes romantically involved with Superman," Flockhart suggested.

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Aries Deal with troublesome issues by making positive changes to your living arrangements. This will help dissipate any tension.

Taurus Forget about sticking to your schedule today. Social activities will relieve your stress. Get out and enjoy time spent with friends.

Gemini Try not to overreact to matters that you can't change. Take a moment to reflect on all the positive aspects and situations in your life.

Cancer Before you place blame, look at the reasons for your own behavior. Unless you have the facts, you will make an inaccurate judgment.

Leo As you learn and grow spiritually, your plans for the future will take on a new direction. Look ahead with optimism, not anxiety.

Virgo Take off your rose-colored glasses if you plan to renew a previous relationship. By romanticizing the past, you risk making the same mistake.

Libra Someone will not like the choices you make today, but you are better off looking out for yourself first. Refuse excessive demands.

Scorpio Rely on your skill, experience and intuition. You have what it takes to get ahead, so ignore anyone who tries to hold you back.

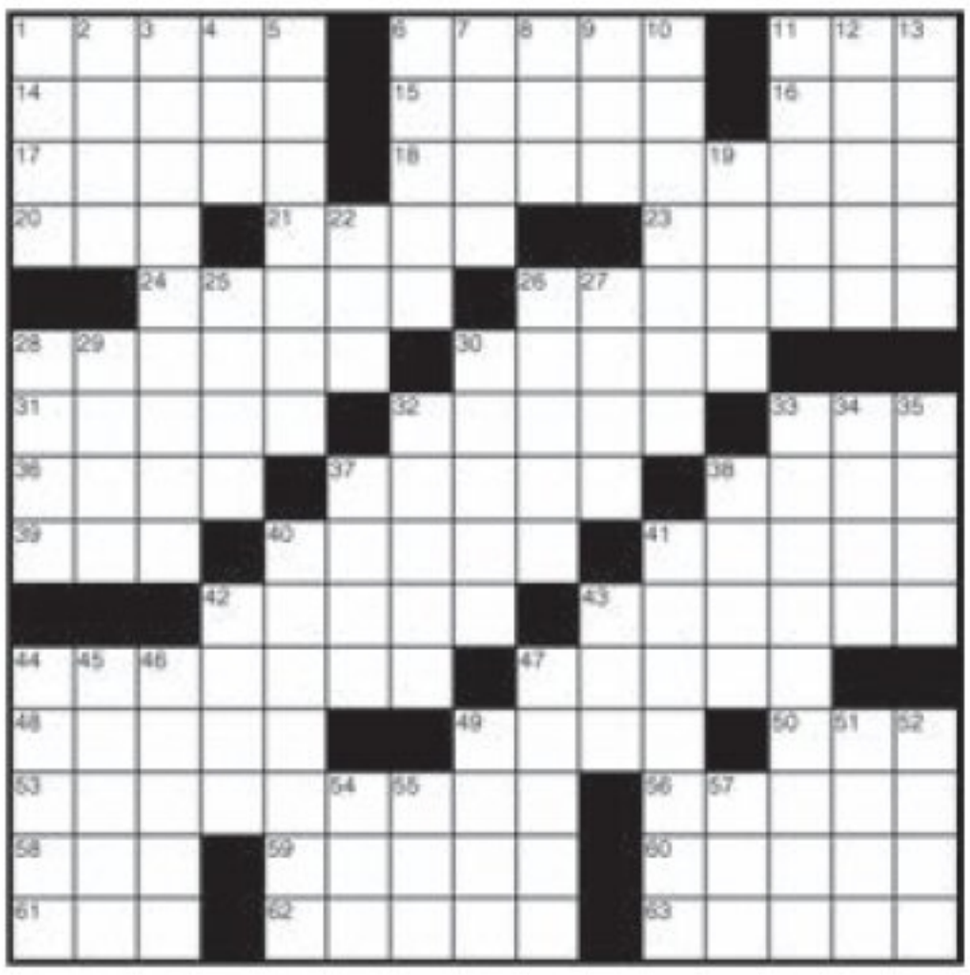
Sagittarius Your words and actions will have a strong influence on others. Rely on tact and self-control in your dealings to avoid a mishap.

Capricorn Cut ties with the people who have been causing you anxiety. You have to direct your energy into independent pursuits.

Aquarius Consider taking on extra work or looking for a better-paying job. A positive change is brewing, so take the initiative.

Pisces Don't forget about people who have always stood by you. Show those who count what they mean to you by sharing your feelings. EUGENIA LAST

metro.us/crossword



Across

1 Nikola the inventor
6 Explorer — de Leon
11 White vestment
14 Of an Andean empire
15 Steel girder (hyph.)
16 Fitting
17 Blue bloods
18 Where one stands
20 Pair in Scotland
21 Courts
23 Rolex rival
24 Germ source?
26 The Waltz King
28 Solitude enjoyers
30 Preside
31 Phony handle
32 Serious theater
33 MTV hosts
36 Beseeched
37 Urbane
38 Kettle handle
39 Golf term
40 Sponge
41 Maggot, for one
42 Jabs playfully
43 Glitterati (2 wds.)
44 Juntas
47 Cholla and nopal
48 Elicit a chuckle
49 "B.C." cartoonist
50 Mao — -tung
53 Metal in bananas
56 Kayak kin
58 Part of TGIF
59 Make a remark
60 Ms. Witherspoon
61 Susan of "L.A. Law"
62 Fall guy
63 Loosens, as a grip

Down

1 Pinball no-no
2 Enough, in verse
3 More spindly
4 Fictional collie
5 Results
6 Basketball move
7 Osaka sashes
8 Bridal notice word
9 Raven's call
10 Department stores
11 Farewell
12 Gill alternatives
13 Second-brightest stars
19 FitzGerald's poet
22 NATO cousin
25 Aim toward
26 Clear the stubble
27 Gentle
28 Reindeer herder
29 Earthen pot
30 Rugged cliffs
32 Guys
33 A-teams in high school
34 Kid around
35 Thin board
37 Rice wine
38 Quilt stuffing
40 Arises (2 wds.)
41 Stern reprimand
42 Leaning Tower town
43 Canister
44 Fast
45 Steal the scene
46 Plucky
47 Accord competitor
49 Tints
51 Letter encl.
52 Just scrapes by
54 RR terminal
55 Gomez's hairy cousin
57 Drop — — line

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easy

5		2		4		9		
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					5	3		1
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4	1		2		9			7
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		8		9		7		4

hard

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7			1			6		9
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Lena Dunham's character on "Girls" is going to take up running in the next season, too.
GETTY IMAGES

Do it with a friend

Making friend-dates for a run and indulging in a post-workout smoothie gives you something to look forward to, with the bonus of holding yourself accountable to actually work out. "Before you start running with a friend, set expectations about the run so you can accomplish your goals," Wilpers says.

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MAKE HEALTHY YOUR NEW HAPPY

Lena Dunham's coach will get you hooked on running

The actress learned to love it, and you can too. The Mile High Run Club's Matt Wilpers share his tips.

EMILY LAURENCE
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If you think you'll never be one of those people who runs five miles before work or trains for a marathon, don't write yourself off so fast. Lena Dunham recently confessed she hated running her whole life — until she started training with Matt Wilpers of the Mile High Run Club. "Working with Lena was an awesome experience for me," Wilpers tells us. "I helped transform her attitude about fitness by helping her build confidence." Here, he shares how you can start enjoying it, too.

Set specific and measurable goals

If you aren't one of those people who just naturally loves to run, you need a reason to do it, or it can seem a bit pointless. "Some people [set a goal] to work up to their first race, such as a 5K," Wilpers says. "Other people, like my dad, start running to improve their overall health. I think it's really important to set specific and measurable goals so you can track your progress and feel a sense of accomplishment as you progress," Wilpers says. Once you start doing that, you'll be motivated to keep running.

Switch it up

If you think running is boring, try it in a new way. Wilpers says he grew up running the mountain biking trails in his hometown. While that may be hard to do in an urban area, cities boast amazing skyline views. Never underestimate the power of beautiful scenery to make you look forward to a run. Another new way to challenge yourself: Take a treadmill class. "I love coaching treadmill classes," Wilpers says. "People who come in can expect a well thought-out workout with motivating and experienced coaches and participants of all fitness levels."

Come up with a motto

Wilpers says he has lots of mottos that he lives by, but his favorite is "sharp body, sharp mind." A running motto can keep you going and also can bleed into other areas of your life. "As long as I maintain my fitness, I think clearly and make better decisions," Wilpers says.

Let the Weight Be Over

"My weight loss journey has been life-changing!" –Jeff

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Find your hero's strength

Heroes never set out on their journey alone — they're supported by the people, experiences and skills they bring along. ISTOCK

I came across the concept of the hero's journey when I needed it most — while struggling with my father's death. Among his shelves of books was "The Hero With a Thousand Faces" by the famous cultural anthropologist Joseph Campbell. It describes a story that has been told in every culture since ancient times.

While it has many variations, the hero's journey has a simple core plot: The character answers a call to leave home, faces all kind of obstacles, discovers a treasure and returns home victorious and enriched.

What struck me most, however, was Campbell's point that every hero possesses the preparation, tools and support to succeed in his or her quest, whether it's a magical weapon, a latent special power or characters who appear at the darkest moment to offer support and guidance along the way.

Once Upon a Couch

KIM SCHNEIDERMAN, MSW, LCSW

STEPOUTOFYOURSTORY.COM

Kim Schneiderman, LCSW, is a psychotherapist and the author of "Step Out of Your Story: Writing Exercises to Reframe and Transform Your Life." Email Kim your questions at askkim@metro.us.

After reading the book and reflecting on my own journey, I took an inventory of all the resources in my favor — supportive, savvy friends; past successes improvising in new situations; a gym membership to work off the stress, etc. — and realized I was up to the dual challenges of grieving while sorting out my father's estate. Becoming the hero of your story doesn't necessarily demand extraordinary acts of bravery or selflessness but rather the ability to slay one's inner dragons and conquer challenges that threaten to overwhelm you. This can take patience, faith and small but persistent steps in a consistent direction.

If facing the conflict in your story seems daunting, you can help yourself in one of these two ways.

1 Change your attitude

Take charge by reframing the challenge as an opportunity. Ask yourself, "What is this situation testing?" Consider this obstacle as a personal growth workout and target the emotional and spiritual muscles you need to strengthen.

2 Marshal your resources

When life presents you with challenges, prepare to tackle them by becoming consciously aware of your personal strengths and all the resources — people, practices, inspirations and lessons learned from previous experiences — that support you.

The challenges in your life story are yours alone to face. By changing your attitude and marshaling your resources in a consistently positive direction, you may discover that the challenges confronting you are more possible than you realize.

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How close are we to male birth control?

Scientists are working on several promising avenues of research for a male contraceptive. ISTOCK

Men want better options than condoms and vasectomies. Here's a look at the four best candidates.

ELODIE NOEL, MWN
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When it comes to birth control, men are rarely trusted to use any form of conventional contraceptive. But there's a reason scientists are focused on developing a birth control option for men: It might just be the safest — and most effective — method.

"Right now, the only options on the market [for men] are insufficient. There is the vasectomy, which is not reversible, and condoms, which have a pregnancy rate of 18 percent — mainly due to inconsistent use," explains Aaron Hamlin, executive director of the Male Contraception Initiative, a group advocating for the development of birth control options for men.

"Before 1960, when the [birth control] pill hit the market, the condom was the main method, so it was a shared responsibility," Hamlin points out. The shift toward placing the burden on women when it comes to birth control has had negative consequences for both genders.

At the moment, several promising research studies focusing on different stages of the fertilization process are being carried out across the world. But how close are we to developing a birth control option for men?

"People have been saying '10 years from now' ever since 1980, so I'd rather not repeat that, as it is too difficult to tell," says Dr. David Sokal, MCI's chairman. "It depends mostly on the funding. We have the technical skills to develop nonhormonal contraceptives, but without resources to do the research, it could be 30 years or 50 years."

Here's a look at the four most promising candidates.

Gendarussa

Gendarussa is an herbal contraceptive derived from a shrub that grows in Indonesia. The research team at Airlangga University, Indonesia, has been working on Gendarussa for 30 years and so far has not found any side effects.

"Gendarussa has made it to phase two human clinical trials, which is very promising, although it hasn't been confirmed by other researchers," explains Sokal. "The exact mechanism is not known, but because the sperm count and motility are reported to be normal, the hypothesis is that it must interfere in some way in the fertilization."

Status: Additional trials are still needed to better define the dosage and possible side effects.

EP007

North Carolina-based Eppin Pharma is working on a small organic compound that binds to eppin, a protein on the surface of human sperm, resulting in the loss of sperm motility.

A study published in 2004 demonstrated that the compound resulted in complete and reversible contraception in male monkeys. The team led by Michael O'Rand believes the nonhormonal drug will be taken orally a relatively short time before sexual activity.

Status: "Currently, we are working on determining the drug's toxicology and beginning nonhuman primate tests," the scientist adds.

Kinase inhibitor

One relatively new but very promising piece of research focuses on a compound identified by Dr. Gary Flynn, a pharmacology researcher at Stanford University. His research is targeting a family of molecules that make up the kinase inhibitor, which prevents proteins from being switched off and has been used to treat cancer.

"He thinks he has found a new kinase inhibitor that only has an effect on the testes and which appears critical to the proper production of sperm," says Sokal. MCI believes in this line of research so much that it has launched a crowdfunding campaign to support it.

Status: "It is at a very early stage of the research and needs financial support," he says.

Vasalgel

A nonhormonal contraceptive by the Parsemus Foundation, a medical research organization, Vasalgel is a polymer injected into the sperm-carrying tubes, blocking sperm. One injection would last for years. "Vasalgel will be a long-acting, reversible contraceptive, like an IUD," explains Sokal. "The goal is basically to offer a reversible vasectomy."

Status: Medical trials will begin as early as next year, but don't expect it on shelves soon. "To get approval for a use of five years, you have to do a study that lasts five years. And to get approval for a reversible vasectomy, you need to wait until you have enough men who have had the procedure successfully reversed," Sokal says, which means the earliest Vasalgel could hit the market is 2020.

VASALGEL, FACEBOOK

MACNOW: EAGLES' MURRAY IS GETTING NO RESPECT

The most underrated player on the Eagles led the NFL in rushing last season — by 484 yards.

DeMarco Murray ran for 1,845 yards — 17th highest total in league history. He scored 13 touchdowns. He finished third in MVP voting and was named by colleagues as the NFL's fourth-best player going into this season.

And yet, the prevailing wisdom seems to be that Murray is about to crumble into sawdust, that the wear and tear he sustained last year as feature back of the Dallas Cowboys has him on the precipice of devolving into Michael Haddix, owner of the worst yards-per-carry average in NFL history.

"DeMarco Murray is not the real deal," brayed Skip Bayless, noted ESPN jackass and Cowboys shill. "Chip Kelly and the Eagles will soon discover how little he has left."

Darren Sproles and Ryan Mathews will lessen Murray's load. / GETTY IMAGES

"Consider this a disaster waiting to happen," declared the fantasy football guide I bought the other day. "Every trend, every scouting report and every bit of logic screams that Murray's owners (including the Eagles) will be heartbroken in 2015 after overpaying for him."

Granted, that pessimism comes from one screaming ninny and one magazine touting an alternative version of football that doesn't resemble reality. But it isn't just them. Two of the brightest football minds in the area — my radio colleagues Ray Didinger and Reuben Frank — look at Murray's workload and history of injuries and forecast that 2015 will be a letdown season for the Eagles' $42 million free agent.

I'll respectfully disagree. Yes, I know the scary analytical trend. I've seen the graphs and charts showing the decline that hits running backs coming off seasons of overuse. And I've heard the argument — usually in a twangy drawl — that it was Dallas' line, not Murray's talent, that carried him to his league-leading 2,261 total yards from scrimmage last year.

My God, it's almost like the Eagles signed Darren McFadden for 2015. No, wait. That was the Cowboys.

Well, I've got more faith in DeMarco Murray. I've also got more faith than most in the Eagles' offensive line — at least three-fifths of it. Finally, I've got faith that Kelly, who understands both offense and sports science better than anyone, knows exactly what he got in Murray and has already figured out how to use him creatively and responsively.

Murray's not going to get 392 carries for the Eagles this season. I'll predict he gets between 250-275. I'm confident that the running game will be among the NFL's elite. Remember these words when you watch the team's most underrated player slash through the Cowboys' secondary.

THE SPORTS PROFESSOR
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3 SPORTS

Trades continue

Phillies acquire infielder

The Phillies' pick up Tyler Pastornicky, a 25-year-old minor leaguer from the Rangers (now the sixth former Rangers minor leaguer with the Phils) Monday in exchange for cash considerations. This season, Pastornicky hit .281 with one homer in 81 games.

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Is Phils' Utley on the trade block?

MLB. Chase Utley could be the next to go as the Phillies' fire sale continues.

Trade season isn't over yet.

With the MLB's waiver trade deadline still three entire weeks away, the Phillies will have another opportunity to add youth and get rid of their highly paid veterans prior to the August 31 deadline (assuming the players pass through waivers).

News broke this weekend that second baseman Chase Utley was placed on revokable waivers just after his return to the team last week.

Chase Utley / GETTY IMAGES

Utley has swung a hot bat of late, blasting three big doubles in the Phillies' sweep of the Padres.

He has a full no-trade clause, meaning he would have to both clear waivers and give his consent for a trade to go through.

One place he would likely accept a trade to is San Francisco, where his family lives. And it just so happens, according to reports, that the Giants were scouting Utley all weekend at Petco Park.

So would he go to the Giants, a team in the thick of yet another playoff race?

When asked if he would be a Phillie at season's end, Utley replied: "I think that's a little too far to look ahead. Our goal here is to get ready for Arizona."

Utley is still owed more than $4 million this season but will likely be a free agent at season's end.

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NFL. Eagles corner Shepherd done for season with ACL tear

Jaylen Watkins and other Eagles defensive backs have an opportunity to make an impact after Shepherd's injury. / GETTY IMAGES

Chip Kelly and defensive coordinator Billy Davis each told reporters that they traded Brandon Boykin before training camp because they were happy with their depth at cornerback — and their options at nickel.

And the biggest asset for the team at the nickle spot, rookie JaCorey Shepherd, was really turning heads all throughout training camp.

But the Eagles' depth chart is fragile like an ACL. And at Lincoln Financial Field on Sunday, after a collision along the sideline with Darren Sproles, Shepherd's ACL ended the cornerback's season and put a hurdle in the Eagles' plans.

A shuffle will likely take place in the next few days. Eric Rowe's reps at outside cornerback could see an increase, and Nolan Carroll could, presumably, see some reps at nickel. And Walter Thurmond, who has played at slot corner for pieces of five NFL seasons, could move over from safety to the slot to make way for another defensive back like Earl Wolff opposite Malcolm Jenkins.

Quoted

"We're going to mix and match and move everybody around, and it's neat to have the ability from both the skill set from the players in the secondary and a football intelligence set." Billy Davis

"I thought it was a cramp," said Jaylen Watkins, another defender eager to make the most of this new opportunity. "I heard a thud and saw [Shepherd] go to the ground."

A lot of unknowns remain, but the personnel exists on the Eagles' roster for a talented player to take advantage of the situation.

"I'm trying to be a starter on this team," Watkins said. "Wherever they feel I can best fit on this team, that's where I'll go."

EVAN MACY

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- If you are interested in getting more information, please contact:

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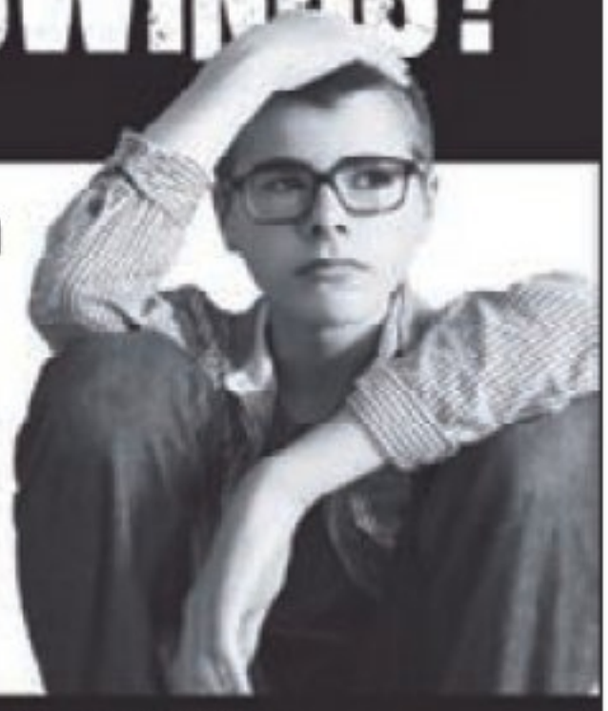

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